

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY BIKEWAY PLAN

Adopted By The Board of Supervisors
February 22, 1989

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Executive Summary

Bicycling provides an excellent form of recreation in Chesterfield County. Over 50,000 of County residents over the age of 12 regularly participate in bicycling for recreation. In addition, bicycling provides an alternate form of transportation as over 10,000 County residents over the age of 12 commute to school or work on a bicycle.

Although there are a limited number of isolated bike trails in the County parks system, there has been little planning or development of a coordinated Countywide bikeway system. The purpose of the Countywide Bikeway Plan is to designate a coordinated system of bike facilities to connect County and State parks with other high bike traffic generators such as schools, so that less hazardous bicycling facilities can be provided consistent with the demand for the facilities when development proposals and capital improvement budgets are considered. The plan is not intended to determine the specific type of facility appropriate for specific roadways. A

detailed engineering study will be completed at the time of construction.

Background

in 1975, the Chesterfield County Planning Department prepared the Bikeway Planning Report. This document appears to have been the first time this issue was addressed by the County.

In this report, the Planning Department studied other local efforts to provide bikeway facilities and reviewed several reports concerning bikeway development. As a result, the staff concluded that providing a system of Countywide bikeway facilities would be costly and that available funds for construction were minimal. At that time, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) would fund for bikeway development but only in connection with planned roadway construction where the bikeway would be located in the existing right-of-way. In addition, monies used for bikeway construction would be deducted by VDOT from the total revenue available for a County's secondary road improvements. Also, the funds could only be applied to bikeways which would fulfill a commuter function.

The 1975 report also indicated that the involvement of the public was vital in planning and developing bikeway facilities. In fact, public demand usually provided the strongest justification for the development of such facilities.

The Planning staff also recommended that the report should be used as a tool and a format by which concerned parties could be better informed and directed toward providing a system of bikeways beneficial to the citizens of Chesterfield County. The staff developed a guideline for planning bikeways in the County through a presentation of goals and objectives aimed at providing less hazardous, user-oriented and coordinated facilities for the County.

At approximately the same time of the 1975 Bikeway Report, the Crater Planning District Commission issued the Bikeways Plan for the Tri-Cities Urban Area. In addition to issues similarly addressed in the Chesterfield report, the Crater PDC document identified specific routes for bikeways in Petersburg, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Prince George County, Dinwiddie County and a portion of southern Chesterfield County. A schedule for implementation was included as well as the identification of funding sources.

In June 1982, the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (RRPDC) prepared the Regional Bicycle Plan for the Richmond Area Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO). This plan included the portion of Chesterfield County which fell within the MPO's

Urban Study Area. The plan identified existing bicycle routes and discussed locations for future routes. This comprehensive plan, however, was neither approved nor adopted by the Richmond Area MPO.

In a more recent development, Chesterfield County published in 1988 The Plan for Chesterfield. This document presents Chesterfield County's comprehensive plan, as revised. This adopted plan is presented in five Area Plans, incorporating other community-scale plans and special studies as all parts of a whole that form the County's comprehensive plan. The need to create the opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle travel was identified in several areas of the County throughout the plan. Citizen input, particularly in the northern and western areas of the County, provided the impetus for establishing specific policies relating to the development of bikeway facilities and other types of trails in the Chesterfield Plan.

Bike Facility Inventory

Pocahontas State Park, located near the Chesterfield County Courthouse Complex, contains the most extensive bike trail system in the County with almost six miles of road trails. This 2500 acre park provides a variety of activities and experiences for Chesterfield residents as well as for residents of the entire Richmond Metropolitan area and the state of Virginia as well.

Currently, bicycling is accommodated within the park through a system of bike trails primarily as a loop around the beaver pond. Biking may also be accommodated on the road system in the park.

Pocahontas State Park with its current provision of bike riding could serve as a vital link to an overall Countywide bikeway system.

Currently, there are no bike facilities provided specifically within any of the County parks, athletic complexes or between schools and adjoining neighborhoods. However, a section of the national Bicentennial Bicycle Route travels through Chesterfield County. This route was originally developed by the League of American Wheelmen and is marked by VDOT with extending road signs. This shared roadway facility passes over many high volume highways, creating safety problems for both the motorist and the cyclist.

In areas of the county where there is relatively low traffic on the highways, bicycles can be accommodated. This situation is currently found mostly in the western section of the county and on subdivision streets.

The western area of the county provides the bicyclist with an excellent scenic experience as well as good opportunities for exercise. However,

there are a few points of destination or interest to the rider such as schools or park facilities. Better facilities for bicycles which would link the western portion of the county to the more populated areas could provide a greater number of bicyclists with the opportunity for long distance rides within Chesterfield County.

Within the past few years, the County has placed greater emphasis on pedestrian circulation within mixed-use developments. Additional bikeway facilities are anticipated within some of these larger developments.

Demand for Bikeway Facilities

Statistics from the Bicycle Federation of America show the number of bicycle riders in the United States has climbed from 72 million in 1983 to 85 million in 1987. Bicycle commuters have risen from 1.5 million to 2.2 million in 1987. Of these riders 45 million are adults (persons 16 years of age and over), some 53% of the population. Forty million children under the age of 16 ride bikes or 47% of the child population. This report estimates a 20% increase in adults cycling regularly (average of once a week) and a 10% increase in bicycle commuters over the age of 12 during 1988.

The Virginia Outdoor Plan's "Analysis of Virginia Outdoor Recreational Demand, 1990" states that 38.3% of CHESTERFIELD RESIDENTS over the age of 12 or 54,147 adults ride a bike for pleasure an average of 38.4 days of the year. There are an additional 10,092 CHESTERFIELD RESIDENTS over the age of 12 who commute to school or work on their bikes an average of 65.5 days a year. According to the study, there are nine miles of bike trails currently in the county and estimates that between 47 and 76 miles of bike trails are needed. This study was done on a 1982 population base and has a 98% confidence level.)

The Richmond Area Bicycle Association (RABA), reports a membership of 277 in 1981 which has jumped to a membership of 490 in 1988. A membership often represents an entire family with several riders. During the last two years, there has been a Chesterfield Branch of the Richmond Area Bicycle Association established for County residents. Just recently this club has become independent from RABA, and formed BOSS, Bicycle Organization of South Side. This new club plans to focus on the beginning cyclist with short rides for families.

An increase in demand for less hazardous bikeway facilities is expected to continue in the future. As automobile traffic increases on the existing highway network, travel for cyclists will become more difficult unless a less hazardous, efficient bikeway system is provided.

Benefits of Providing Bicycling Facilities

As stated previously, two objectives can be met through the use of the bicycle. First, access to schools, parks, athletic complexes, libraries, places of work and the like can be greatly improved with the use of the bicycle as an alternative means of transportation.

By allowing for less hazardous bicycle transportation, those persons without the use of an automobile can travel to and from schools and park facilities. The adult population with bicycles could journey to work or shopping without having to depend solely on the automobile.

The provision of bicycle access to youth and adult sports activities at parks and athletic facilities provide greater availability of these facilities and programs to an existing user group. The Parks and Recreation staff estimates that some 20,000 youth and 6,000 adults participate each year in athletic activities held at county parks and athletic complexes.

The second objective met through the use of the bicycle is biking as a recreational activity in itself. The benefits of exercise and the ability to tour the county by bicycle can only be realized by a greater number of people if a less hazardous and effective bikeway system is implemented.

The introduction of bikeway facilities in Chesterfield County can also provide a link to existing bike routes in the city of Richmond and the Tri-Cities area. A bikeway along Ironbridge Road (Route 10) from the courthouse area to the Richmond City limits would connect with the existing bike lanes on Broad Rock Road.

The development of a bikeway system in southern Chesterfield County could promote biking into Colonial Heights and Petersburg. In a Bikeways Plan prepared for the Tri-Cities urban area in the mid 1970's, several routes were identified which would connect this area to Chesterfield County.

The provision of a bikeway system connecting Chesterfield County with bikeway facilities in adjacent jurisdictions could promote commuting as well as long distance recreational travel by bicycle. Such a comprehensive bikeway system would meet the needs for biking facilities for the residents of Chesterfield County as well as providing bike access for residents of adjacent jurisdictions.

The Plan

The Countywide Bikeway Plan identifies routes where bikeway facilities should be provided. The plan does not identify the specific type of facility

to be provided. That decision will be made when construction of the facility is undertaken. The plan does, however, anticipate a combination of exclusive bicycle roadways (bike paths separated from automobile traffic), bicycle lanes (paved areas designated for bicyclists along existing highways) and bike routes (existing low volume highways signed for bike traffic, but not widened). The plan will be used in consideration of development proposals and public capital improvements projects.

The plan is viewed as the first step in developing a comprehensive bikeway facility plan for the County. It identifies the primary routes for bike travel. Follow-up plans should be undertaken to address local and neighborhood level needs. It is also recognized that less hazardous bicycle travel over many of the identified routes can only be achieved when the existing highways are improved to include bike trails or lanes.

Goals and Objectives

GOAL: ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE BIKEWAY SYSTEM TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF BICYCLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHESTERFIELD CITIZENS

- A. OBJECTIVE: Develop a system of bicycle routes, trails, lanes and paths throughout the County to accommodate the needs of both the recreational and commuter cyclist.

Strategy 1: Create the bikeway system based on a primary network configuration that utilizes Pocahontas State Park as a hub with major routes radiating out to serve all parts of the County.

Strategy 2: Design the primary and secondary bikeway network to traverse population concentrations and to link nodes of activity, including County parks, schools, athletic complexes and libraries.

Strategy 3: Encourage the routing of bikeways through and along aesthetic and scenic corridors and landscaped areas, whenever possible.

Strategy 4: Provide connecting routes to existing commuter bikeway systems in the city of Richmond and the Tri-cities area.

- B. OBJECTIVE: Develop the bikeway system by establishing key increments of the primary network configuration which will provide a framework for later improvements.

Strategy 1: Obtain VDOT approval of bikeway facilities on the Route 10 Corridor from the Richmond City line to the County Government Complex as a critical first segment of the bikeway system.

Strategy 2: Designate the Courthouse Road Corridor from Route 60 to Five Forks as the second priority in establishing the bikeway system's primary network.

Strategy 3: Coordinate actions with State Park personnel to integrate the Courthouse Road bikeway with existing and proposed Park bike paths. In conjunction with the forthcoming master plan, design new bike-ways to provide linkage from the Park to other parts of the County.

C. OBJECTIVE: Provide bikeways that are direct, convenient and easy to use.

Strategy 1: Coordinate through the Virginia Department of Transportation the design consideration of bikeways with any proposed road projects including widening or new construction.

Strategy 2: Prepare detailed cost estimates to effectively balance alternative facilities costs with safety and aesthetic elements.

Strategy 3: Design and construct bikeway facilities that require minimal maintenance.

GOAL: CREATE THE BIKEWAY SYSTEM IN A WAY THAT IS COST-EFFECTIVE AND MINIMIZES THE COUNTY'S FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT RELINQUISHING SAFETY AND AESTHETICS.

A. OBJECTIVE: Design the bikeway system to utilize existing corridors and rights-of-way to reduce costs of land acquisition:

Strategy 1: Pursue expansion of the bikeway system through railroad rights-of-way, multiple use easement, and utility/power line easements.

Strategy 2: Develop a system of bikeway graphics that clearly identifies designated bikeways and instructs as to their proper use.

Strategy 3: Prepare appropriate mapping of the bikeway system and encourage the dissemination of maps to interested citizens and users.

Strategy 4: Enlist support of bike clubs to monitor the condition of bikeways and to advise in the proper identification/ instruction of segments of the County bikeway system.

GOAL: CREATE EXPANSION OF THE BIKEWAY SYSTEM IN A WAY THAT PARALLELS COUNTY GROWTH AND THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES.

A. OBJECTIVE: As new areas of the County develop, encourage developers to provide bikeways to serve their development project and that are designed to link with adjacent bike routes.

Strategy 1: Reserve natural areas and open space through creative land planning and subdivision. Preservation of natural features should be sought through dedication of public land or permanent conservation easements. Incorporate bikeways into these areas and the development of a Countywide "greenways" system.

Strategy 2: Strengthen the site plan review process to assure the integration of bikeways into new development projects with appropriate linkages to community activity centers.

B. OBJECTIVE: Provide segments of the bikeway system with the expansion of public services.

Strategy 1: Incorporate bikeways with the development of new public facilities including schools, parks and libraries.

Strategy 2: Determine bikeway and connecting route needs early in design phases of any public facility project and incorporate anticipated costs into the Capital Improvements Program.

Implementation

The crucial aspect in the implementation of the Countywide Bikeways System Plan is the establishment of the hub of the system: Route 10 from the city of Richmond to the County Government Complex and Courthouse Road from Midlothian Turnpike to Five Forks. As widening projects for these two roads are being considered in the near future, now is the time for the Bikeway System to be integrated into the plans for road improvements and expansions. The Board of Supervisors has already requested the Virginia Department of Transportation to provide bike lanes along Route 10. Before VDOT will consider this request, the County must have an adopted bikeway plan. With the main trails in place, the collector network of lanes can then have a major link to provide connections with the city of Richmond and various business, educational and recreational facilities.

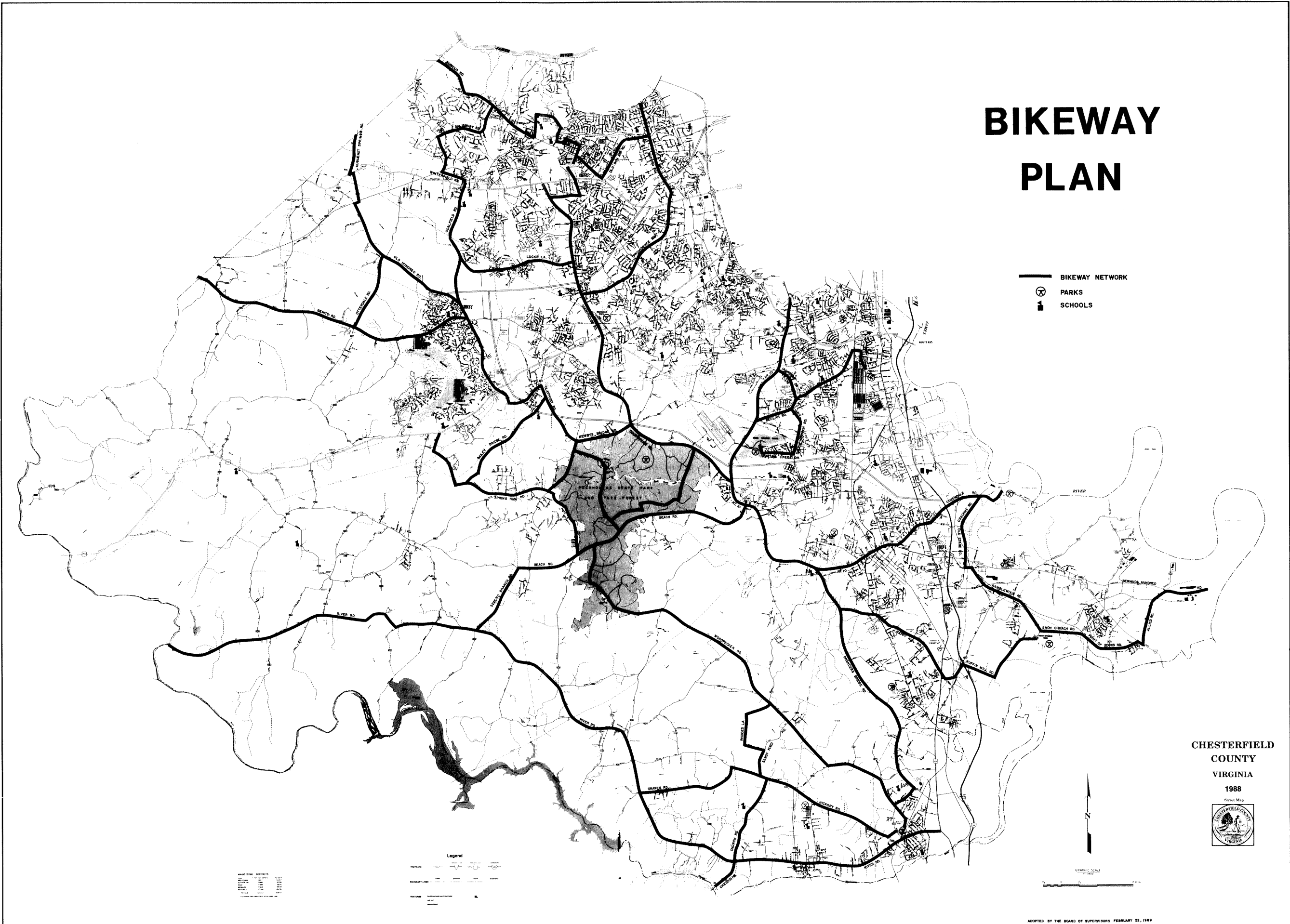
Additional follow-up studies should be initiated to consider the use of other public rights-of-way for the use of bicycle trails. Abandoned railroad

tracks have been used widely across the country for this purpose, but other easements could be used as well. Power, sewer and water line easements all could provide trail space. These easements all require clearing, grading and maintenance by their respective departments and Virginia Power. Further study must go into the possibility of obtaining a "bikeway easement" from the individual property owners on existing easements and as they are developed.

As new developments occur in the county, internal bikeway systems should be provided with linkages to the county's system. This would allow residents of subdivisions to travel from their homes to school, work or recreation areas without having to cope with the difficulty of sharing the overcrowded collector road system with automobiles. This would also encourage the use of the bicycle as a means of commuting to work and school.

BIKEWAY PLAN

- BIKEWAY NETWORK
- ⊗ PARKS
- SCHOOLS



CHESTERFIELD
COUNTY
VIRGINIA
1988
Street Map



GRAPHIC SCALE
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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